

Asian short-clawed otter

APRIL

MONTHLY OVERVIEW REPORT / 2026

COLCHESTER
ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Charity no. 1105621

THE ZOO



Golden lion tamarin

On 29th April, female golden lion tamarin, Freia, gave birth to a single infant. The group have settled since the new arrival and older sibling, Esme, is showing keen interest.

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

A pair of Slender-tailed meerkats arrived on 14th April. The male, called Victor, arrived from ZSL Whipsnade, and the female, called Fang, arrived from Woburn Safari Park. The pair are currently being mixed off show, but will be swapped with the existing meerkat group at Suricata Sands in the near future.

Two female alpacas arrived on 17th April from a private breeder - they are named Alba and Aesha. They are currently serving 30-day quarantine, but will join our current group at Familiar Friends in the near future.

On 29th April, male squirrel monkey, Luca, left for Emerald Park in Ireland.

Two rainbow lorikeet chicks hatched at the end of April.

Male spider monkey Julius was euthanised on the 4th of April due to deteriorating condition and poor prognosis. He was sent for a postmortem to determine the exact cause of death which indicated chronic-active intestinal inflammation.



Chimpanzee, Jessie

On the 28th April, Jessie, a 26-year-old female chimpanzee joined the collection from Welsh Mountain Zoo. She is currently kept separate from the rest of the troop but has visual access.

INTERNAL TRANSFERS

The two pairs of golden headed lion tamarins have swapped enclosures - male, Harvey, and female, Dani, can now be seen in the Worlds Apart walkthrough habitat and male, Edward, and female, Blondie, can now be seen in the Rainforest walkthrough.

The new group of 18 tinfoil barb have finished quarantine and have now moved to the Giant Asian pond turtle tank in Rajang's Forest.



Golden-headed lion tamarin



DEVELOPMENT WORK

At the end of the month, the Asian short-clawed otters and binturongs moved off show to enable new climbing beams to be added to their habitat.

The maintenance team continued work at Playa Patagonia in order to adjust the land area and viewing windows for a future group of sea lions.

Binturong



Red panda



Lion-tailed macaque

MORE NEWS

Welfare work focused on training team leaders in completing detailed welfare assessment audits for their species, and developing a more rapid process for assessing reptile species using the new BIAZA assessment toolkit.

A number of quality of life assessments were reviewed this month for individuals of various species, including gelada baboon, Barbary macaque, lion-tailed macaque, coppery titi monkey, red-bellied tamarin, Visayan spotted deer, llama, sheep, red panda and giant anteater. A presentation was also delivered to ARU Writtle looking at how training fits into welfare assessments.

An internal team leader meeting centred on rolling out the new BIAZA Animal Welfare Audit Tool across all animal sections.

The Deputy Team Leader of Sea Lions attended the BIAZA Pinniped Conference in Deep Sea World, Scotland.

EDUCATION



11

HOME EDUCATION SESSIONS
WERE RUN THIS MONTH
FOR A TOTAL OF

363

PARTICIPANTS

62

SCHOOLS VISITED
COLCHESTER ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY THIS MONTH

BRINGING

2,585

STUDENTS

73

SESSIONS WERE RUN
THIS MONTH

As with March, Easter Holiday days shifting dramatically impacts attendance e.g. 2022 and 2023 had the holiday entirely in April. While we had lower March numbers, it is more than balanced out with these higher April numbers.

Academic Year to date (Sept-April) we have had 17.4K student visitors, slightly lower than 2023-2024 and 2022-23, but higher than all the other years. The number of school pupils educated within sessions amount to 12,000. Looking ahead at the rest of the year, with pre-bookings, we are already at 35K total school visitors, so only about 10K off maximum numbers, and we are still taking bookings for May-July, so hopefully on target.

Two outreach sessions were conducted this month, one of which reached 100 participants.



VOLUNTEERS

On a number of days, six volunteers volunteered per day.

The props continue to be popular education tools.

956 visitors also participated in 819 Exploratorium boxes.

91

VOLUNTEERS

455

HOURS DONATED

19,000

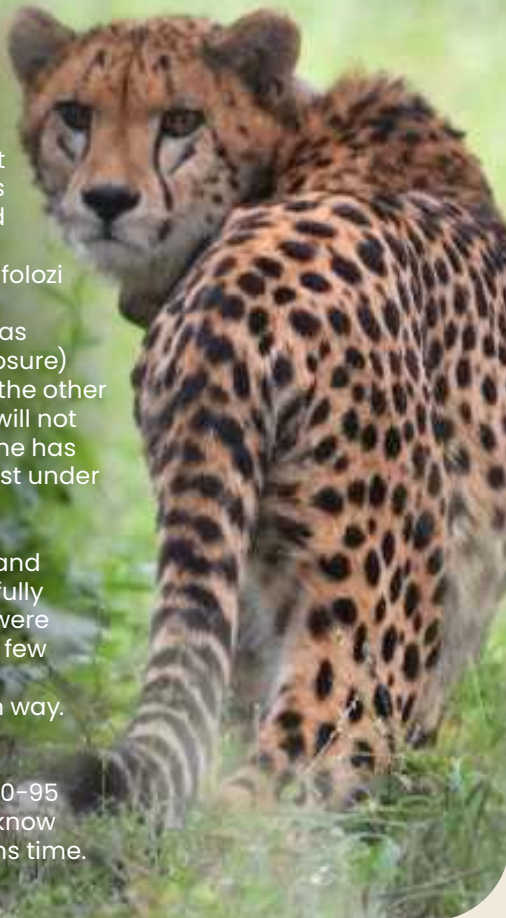
VISITORS
ENGAGED WITH

UMPHAFA NATURE RESERVE

CHEETAH NEWS

After three months of waiting for permits, male cheetah, Storm, finally arrived. He was delivered during a storm, hence the apt name. He is 22 months old and was orphaned in May 2025. A litter of four at Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, he was captured in October 2025 and has been in a boma (enclosure) with two sisters since, the other sibling sadly died. He will not be hard to identify as he has two matching scars just under his eyes.

Resident male Balula and female Ashia successfully met this month. They were in the same area for a few days, resting together, before going their own way. Hopefully they mated during this period; cheetah gestation is 90-95 days so the team will know for sure in a few months time.



RESERVE ANIMALS

An exciting release took place this month of another male African wildcat! He was caught poaching on a farm and, after being genetically tested and checked out health-wise, he was ready to be released onto UmPhafa.

This month, the Field Rangers found the carcass of a baby buffalo. There were no marks on it, so it looks like it died of natural causes. The team checked its mouth and feet but thankfully it showed no signs of Foot & Mouth.

The sub-adult secretary bird taken to FreeMe Wildlife last month had unfortunately sustained a broken pelvis, so the prognosis sadly does not look good.

This month, the team took delivery of 216 blesbok, with more to come in the next few weeks. It has been great seeing them around the Reserve as they have been scarce in the last 6 months, unfortunately due to being a preferred leopard food source.



Wild cat



Blesbok release



Leopards

LEOPARD RELOCATIONS

Another male leopard was captured this month and relocated to Nambiti Reserve. On the day of capture, three leopards had been seen on the Reserve. It took just one night of trying to successfully capture the male the team had named 'Harry Potter'. On arrival at the boma (enclosure) at Nambiti, it took him 7 seconds to manage to escape onto the Reserve itself.

This male is relatively habituated to humans as his territory covered the housing and workshops on UmPhafa. Since his escape from the boma, he has been seen by Nambiti guests every day for 10 days, he was also witnessed being chased by three wild dogs.

In the middle of the month, a second leopard was moved off of UmPhafa to Nambiti. This time a 7-year-old female. The team baited the trap Friday hoping to capture the leopard for Saturday morning, but the wind and rain made things quite unpleasant. She was, however, successfully captured at 9pm Saturday night. The vet arrived in the morning, darted her and took her off to her new home at Nambiti where she is currently in the boma relaxing. The Nambiti team hope to settle her before release as she is a lot more skittish than the male.

OTHER NEWS

The team were joined this week by a new Field Ranger, Zakhele, from Durban; he worked in conservation before joining us.

The Reserve Managers were invited to attend the Honorary Officers of Ezemvelo meeting at Wagendrift to network with like-minded individuals, as well as Ezemvelo Wildlife staff. They also attended a meeting to talk about security in the area.



Interns at M L Sultan School



Handing over funds raised



Intern Coordinator giving talks

INTERN ACTIVITIES

As well as disguising the cage ready for the capture of the male leopard, the remaining intern from the March cohort helped paint fence poles, build gabions to stop erosion and assisted with cheetah monitoring.

She left in the middle of the month and was replaced with a group from East Coast College, including 14 students and two teachers. In their first week, as well as their orientation day, they had a night drive seeing two leopards, witnessed the capture of the female leopard, carried out camera trap surveys, cleared invasive plants and spent the day with the Field Rangers.

In their second week, East Coast continued their exciting trip by visiting M L Sultan school, where they handed over R19,000 in fundraising monies. The school was over the moon, and the monies shall go towards some much-needed maintenance.

The Intern Coordinators carried out presentations to the children about snakes, what to do or what not to do – the feedback on this has been great as the staff members whose children go to the school have told their parents all about snakes! East Coast also played with the younger children and gave out 600 doughnuts. It was definitely a special day for the students and children and one of the interns' favourite activities.

Over the week, they also had the opportunity to see the cheetah release into the boma and the blesbok delivery.

RESERVE MAINTENANCE

Maintenance work continued at the intern accommodation this month, including cleaning the jojo tanks, which contained a lot of sediment, and changing the plumbing to create a filter system from one jojo tank to another, with the last one hopefully being sediment free and giving clear water.

The roofs all needed a paint and, in some areas, leaks fixed and the back wall needed redoing following some damp seen. The team also constructed another large gabion which was urgently needed in a high erosion area.

CONSERVATION & RESEARCH



CONSERVATION NEWS

An internal Sustainability Committee meeting was held, with updates on the targets and actions plans set for 2025-2026.

RESEARCH NEWS

No new research studies commenced this month.

The study which commenced last month continued looking at the effects of visual and acoustic anthropogenic stimuli on conspecific social behaviour in captive golden lion tamarins (*Leontopithecus rosalia*).



Golden lion tamarin